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The Occult Christ

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by Manly P. Hall.

THE OCCULT CHRIST

Today we have a tremendous concrete structure which we call Christianity. It is an institution with laws and by-laws, rituals, ceremonies and codes. It is divided into many parts which have branched off from the parent tree. Each of these sects emphasize certain points and minimize others. Today the Christian faith is represented by the Christian Church. In every nation of the earth are reared these edifices. In manyplaces the buildings are overshadowed by the temples of other gods. Their spires point upward towards the sky, symbols of human aspiration. Kings and presidents take their oath upon the Christian sacred book, but the writer of it had only one garment and no place to lay his head. The cathedrals and churches have thousands of glass windows. From each of these smiles down a sweet-faced man with a lamb in his arms. Jesus was persecuted, laughed at and rediculed in his own day, but today he stands a beautiful creature in pure white garments, with a diadem of jewels and a nimbus of precious stones.

Today we have a great faith, that much like the faiths of other peoples is a tremendous oppresive thing. The cathedrals and Gothic spans of the churches are dark and gloomy. In the midst of the naves and crypts lie the dead in their marble sarcophagi. A solemn chant seems ever in the air. A feeling of awe and distance comes into the soul of man as he enters into the midst of such a sanctuary. His God seems very great, almost terrible. His Divine Father seems very far away, very different from the humble mendicant who wears ruts in the flagstones with his bended knees. To those who love the simple beauty of the Master's life, the humility and naturalness of his doctrine, it seems that this great faith illy represents the man in his humility. The faith is great with complications, with ways and byways, but the man was great in simplicity. The faith is glorious, but it belittles its founder, Who was transcendent in His impersonality. We cannot help but feel that the Christian Church has been very false to the precepts and concepts of the Nazarene.

I was talking a few days ago with one who has spent his life as a minister of the Christian Gospel. He said: "I wonder what the Master Jesus would think and say if He suddenly came into the world today and saw the faith that represented Him." He would look at his picture and ask: "Is this I?" He would listen to His words and, turning aghast, would inquire: "Did I say that?" He would look into the life of Christians and wonder if they bore witness to the massage He had brought two thousand years ago.

We have a great many accounts of the life of Jesus. Many learned volumes have been written discussing His divinity, arguing pro and con concerning His message and His mission. Some look upon Him as a divine incarnation, as indeed God made flesh. Others look upon Him as a great idealist, a great humanitarian. Some call Him the Son of God and others the Son of Man. The modern structure of Christianity is raised upon the divinity of Jesus Christ. The great structure of tomorrow's faith will be raised upon the humanity of Jesus Christ. Concerning this man and His life we have very little information, for even His own day leaves no record of Him. The one paragraph about Him in the writings of Josephus is now admitted to be an interpolation. Much of the story told in the four Gospels is undoubtedly false. Every nation gradually defies its heroes and the simple wanderer preaching the gospel of kindliness among the hills and valleys of Nazareth is now lost amidst a confusion of myths and supernatural allegories.

I love to think of the man, the simple dreamer, struggling to give a dream to His world, a vision which they could not comprehend and which the world today has never actually understood. I like to drop back through the ages to the time in which He lived and rebuild the stories of Him which are still told among the descendants of the ancient schools which existed in the Holy Land during his lifetime.

In the days of Jesus they did not have churches as we understand them, but there were groups of religiously-minded people. Among the ancient hills of Moab and the desert crags of Palestine there were two thousand years ago a number of mystic organizations, some traced themselves back to the School of Samuel the Prophet, others to an Oriental or Egyptian origin. Some had come out of the old Jewish Church and

separated themselves from the parent stem through the medium of religious reforms and reinterpretations of ancient Scriptures. The same thing occurs every day in our own modern faith. Sometimes, however, reinterpretations are only other misinterpretations. Among these groups were especially prominent the Nazarenes, a strange and very reclusive cult, who dwelt in the province of Nazareth and had isolated communities in other parts of the Holy Land. Besides these there were the Baptists, but they were not called that in their own day. They were followers of John the Baptist, who many believed at that time to be the promised Messiah. John had as many disciples as there were lunar days in the month, while Jesus had as many as there were solar months in a year. That is a very significant and important fact. Most of these groups were interpreting the prophecies of Isaiah and Elijah. John went among the little villages and towns preaching his gospel. No one knew who he was and even today there is practically no information. He was not a member of any of the accepted groups, but was a lonely hermit who lived for many years in the desert and while there fasting and praying he received a Divine revelation and went forth preaching the coming of the Lord of Israel. Besides these two groups there were a number of others who represented Oriental culture in the Holy Land. This Oriental culture had come by way of Egypt, which at that time is supposed to have had intercourse with India. Of these groups the Essenes were the most important. They used many of the early Egyptian symbols and were like the Eastern mendicants of today, who gain their spirituality by fasting and prayer. They were kindly and virtuous in their mode of living and venerable in aspect. They dwelt apart from humanity in a rambling monastery on the side of Mount Tabor and along the shores of the Dead Sea. The historian Josephus tells us that the Essenes were very holy, simple, virtuous and law-abiding people.

Many of the principles of modern Masonry come from them, for their ancient symbols were a lambskin apron, a square and a rule. The latter instruments they used in measuring the character of individuals as to whether they were true, upright and square. These holy men did not engage in the mercantile pursuits of their day. They would neither buy, sell nor enter in stores or assume the congested life of cities. They raised sheep for the wool, tilled the ground, gathered herbs and simples, and taught the children of the wealthy and fashionable Jewish and Roman people. Both men and women were included at one time in the Order, although most of these secret Schools were for men only. They were a very peculiar but very learned people. They understood the mysteries of healing the sick, the study of the stars and the interpretation of Scriptures. They could read and write, which was a great distinction at that time. While the majority of thoughtless people despised and ridiculed these hermits, they were forced to employ them whenever educated talent was necessary. We find many stories in which they served as tutors, guardians and legal advisers.

They gathered in the hills or in their temples for meditation and prayer. Here they waited for the coming of the promised Messiah, Who was to redeem His people from the bondage of spiritual ignorance. They gathered around a venerable and ancient priest or patriarch who interpreted for them the esoteric mysteries of the Mosaic law. He was supposed to be in communication with the invisible worlds which these people had learned of from the Egyptians and Chaldeans. Certain of these Orders had made a vow that they would neither cut their hair nor beards until the world Savior should come. Hence their beards fell upon their breasts and their unkempt hair was upon their shoulders. Their garment was of one piece, woven without a seam in the form of a tube. Sometimes they wore an overgarment of rough camel's hair. They were called the Brethern. Jesus and later some of His disciples referred to the houses of the Brethern in different cities where they could go and find hospitality. Again we have the Apostle who sent forth his message to the Brethern of the Seven Churches. These houses were the rest houses of the holy men. They were usually on the outskirts of a community, where a member of the Order dwelt. This wise man was the prophet, the necromancer and the physician of the holy-minded ones who dwelt in that community and they brought their important problems to him as to a father confessor. He was the leech, the doctor, the scribe, and all things in one. His home was always open to any of the other Brethern who, staves in hand, walked from one city to another, preaching the doctrine of simple kindliness and trying to tear down the wall of exclusiveness which certain groups of wealthy and powerful people had built around the accepted Jewish Sanhedrim.

It was about this time also that the first Qabbalists appeared, reinterpreting the books of the Mosaic Law. There was much religious and political dissension in the Holy Land at that time. The church, like the ruling power of today, was at outs with the various parts of itself. The people were under the yoke of Rome and the entire country was regarded as the outskirts of nowhere. No one ever went there who would go anywhere else. It was non-productive, always in a state of revolution and

revolt, was divided into many divisions, and an endless cause of trouble. The only possible return that Rome had for conquering it was that some of the Roman Legions were housed and fed there and a small head tax was paid to Rome.

At the time when Jesus began His ministry His country was in upheaval and sorrow. It was practically non-productive, though small areas were both fertile and productive. The desert valley of the Dead Sea with a few stone and adobe buildings along the shore of the briny waters was desolate and forlorn. Most of the people were without education and were forced into the most menial of pursuits, -- fishing, tending flocks, money-changing, or working for more wealthy families, and in any way possible seeking to eke out their pitiable existence.

The old monastery of the Essenes is still in existence, though now in a pitiable condition of ruin. The Essenes, the Sons of St. John, and the Nazarenes still exist as religious groups. Among the Abysinnians are still preserved many of the early sacred books and canons of Christianity, while the Ethiopian texts have preserved in purity many of the early doctrines which we have lost. These groups even today perpetuate many of the records concerning the life of Christ. At Capernaum and on the shores of Galilee, we still occasionally meet with isolated groups of holy men, perpetuating the records of their forefathers, and in some cases preserving complete accounts of things which are to us only hazy traditions. Buried in subterranean libraries or vaults and concealed in the houses of the Brethern are documents which one of these days will be given to the world. When these are made known, the entire structure of Christianity will collapse and an entirely new and much more accurate interpretation of the early Mysteries will take the place of the blind symbolism of our own age.

Two thousand years ago the monastery of the Essenes, a rambling white stucco building, housed a few score of religious ascetics, who lived alone at peace with themselves and the world about them. Their leader, the wisest of his people, ruled over them with love and integrity. The star of the coming World Savior had been seen in the sky of the invisible worlds and the aged man knew that a great Soul, deep in understanding, was about to come into the world to educate and uplift the sons of men. The ancient world did not look upon miracles as we do. They realized that a miracle was only a perfectly normal thing which they did not understand. Out of the problem of securing for Jesus a pure and clean body has come the myth of the Immaculate Conception. The High Priest chose two of the members of the Order. These were instructed to go into the world, for the Essenes demanded celibacy of their members. Therefore, no exception could be made, so before the two could marry they must leave the Order. The High Priest chose for the parents of the Great Initiate those two who he felt could provide the most perfect body. Immaculate means clean, not supernatural. The body formed for the Great Initiate was built without emotion, lust or passion. It was born free from the taint of selfishness. The pure ascetic lives of its parents also resulted in a very high degree of physical perfection. They built for Jesus as nearly a perfect temple as conditions and time permitted, and into this He came. The Mystery School teaches that Jesus was a reincarnation of King Solomon and that the chain of His lives previous to His appearance as the Messiah has been carefully preserved. The names of His parents have come down to us as Joseph and Mary, but these are symbolical and allegorical titles, and it is very doubtful if anyone outside of the Essenes themselves knows the actual names of either.

The books we have giving the history of Jesus, namely the Four Gospels, have been greatly and seriously tampered with, not only by accidental mis-translation but by actual insertion of material which did not belong there. Some years ago an anonymous Master of Arts of Balliol College, Oxford, went very deeply into the subject and discovered that the Book of Matthew alone was written by at least three men, living centuries apart. (See Mankind, Their Origin and Destiny - London, 1872) It is very possible that the Mystery Schools themselves may have interpolated many things in order to fill out the allegories and complete the mystical structure of the New Testament. We know, for example, that the miracle of turning the water into wine was part of the religious ritual of the Egyptian priests, who performed this miracle occasionally in their temples. While there is no doubt that Jesus was capable of performing miracles, it is very doubtful if He actually did produce all of the phenomena with which He is credited, for a man Who raises the dead, casts out devils, cleanses lepers and feeds multitudes would certainly have found a small niche somewhere in history. At least one contemporary historian would have mentioned Him. But by means of these allegories the Mystery Schools themselves gain certain ends by inserting into the historical narrative great symbolical truths. There is no doubt that such insertions are very common throughout both the Old and New Testaments. It is especially important to know that those parts of the Scriptures devoted to the

miracles are in almost every case the parts added by later hands.

The Essene story of Christ is a very simple one. It is the story of a man, a great man with a great ideal, an Elder Brother of Humanity, Who came into the world to serve the Humanity that He loved. It is the story of the Great Initiate through Whom flowed divine inspiration, but it is not the story of a God made flesh, but rather the account of a man Who had made his own flesh godly by ages of service to Humanity.

It is difficult to separate the actual history from the mythological story. The myth deals with Gods and demons, unknown cities and countless miracles, while the historical story deals with a simple man of godly ideals and noble aspirations, Who renounced the world and went forth penniless and unselfish to preach to the wandering shepherds and disgruntled farmers of his day a doctrine of liberation from the bondage of idolatry, bigotry and ignorance. Through many ages we have had much controversy concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ and at different times His followers have bolted and argued, even gathering into great conclaves to pass judgment on His divinity. How can a group of men by ballot or election judge as to whether Jesus Christ was the Son of God or the Son of Man? Does eternal truth change with the voting of semi-intelligent minds? Christianity has no enemies equal in power to its own ignorant enthusiasts.

The man was born of a natural birth that was clean. His body was given as an offering upon the altar of the Lord. His temple was built according to the law and He dwelt in it. Today the Children of Men are cheated of their birthright. They come into the world as a gratification of human selfishness. They are unwanted and despised or neglected and forgotten. He was given his birthright, a body free from aches and pains, and free from prenatal over-shadowing. The Essenes educated him and taught him the secret doctrine which they knew concerning the spiritual laws of Nature. His message to the world was the message of the Essenes, made public in part only to a world that could understand in part only. His education has always been largely a mystery. He traveled widely, but during these periods we have no record of Him except one on the Island of Ceylon, in the Temple of the Sacred Tooth. There are mysterious records to the effect that Jesus studied there with the Buddhist priests. It is very probable that He visited India, Persia and Arabia, for in his teachings are laws and viewpoints which belong to these nations and were in their possession long before Jesus was born. He returned again to the Temple of the Mysteries in the monastery of the Essenes and there went into the place of prayer, which was called Engaddi, a cave in the side of Mount Tabor. Here he fasted and meditated according to the laws of the Mysteries and here was unfolded to Him His ministry and very probably there was also shown to Him the end of the path of His wandering. He had the enthusiasm and spontaneity of youth and went forth thoughtless of Himself and inspired by the illumination that had come to Him. It is said that His past lives were revealed to Him and the work of the future into the unknown ages was also shown. It has often seemed to me that the deep sadness of His soul, for he indeed was a Man of Sorrows, may have been the result of His ability to look into the future and see the crimes that would be committed in His name. His illumination had come as the result of His labors, studies and meditation. It had been aided by the fact that He had already attained a very high position in His previous incarnations.

At a certain time symbolized by the baptism of the Jordan He received His divine illumination. The overshadowing Spirit of the World Savior, the Lord of Compassion, descended into His soul. Jesus became merely a lantern, through Whose windows gleamed a divine light. He was said to be <u>Christened</u>, for a ray from the Lord of the Sun entered into Him and consecrated <u>Him to the salvation</u> of the Children of Men. Every great illuminated World Teacher has felt the <u>Christening</u> ray of the Great Illuminator. This was the divine ordination, the <u>preparing</u> for His labor. But the Great Flame was far too powerful for even the body that He had learned to unfold so carefully. So again and again He returned to the cave of the Essenes, where the High Priest worked upon His bodies with spiritual power and prevented them disintegrating, before the three years' ministry was accomplished. He wrecked his physical body many times during those trying years, but his Brothers in the Temple strengthened and renewed it and sent Him forth again, preaching against ignorance and fighting for the spiritual liberty of His people. Every soul on the Path of Human Regeneration reaches a point where they become <u>Christened</u>. They awake a sleeping power within their own natures and go forth as <u>He did ministering</u> to the world. Let us go back in our mind's eye and wander with the Holy Man of Syria. Here He comes around a

bend in the road, footsore and weary, His garment heavy with dust, while a little way behind walk His disciples, a heterogeneous group in ragged garments and bleeding feet. Where is the glory which we picture? You would not recognize Jesus if you saw Him today as He walked the Holy Land then. He was dark and swarthy, with aquiline features and typically Jewish nose. His face was tanned from the sun, His hair had been dark, but exposure of His head to the sun had faded it so that it was streaked with brown and red. His garments were the plain robes of the Essene, a one-piece white garment without a seam, now faded yellow and dust-covered, and over that a crimson surcoat of camel's hair. The crimson robe went with Him wherever He traveled. It was the symbol of the heart and the heart's fire which is blood. He cut neither his hair nor beard and both were tangled and snarled, for like the Essenes He waited for the coming of the Lord of Light.

Now turn and look upon His disciples. The saints of today were the beggars and fishermen of Galilee, indeed a motley group. Each followed Him for a different reason, some for love of Him, some for love of themselves. A few saw in Him a King to save them from the Romans, others saw in Him a Wise Man Who would reform the Jews. Some worshipped ignorantly at His feet and called Him God, others plotted behind His back. Probably none of them, with the exception of John the Beloved, understood even a small part of His message. They had neither the education nor the previous training necessary to give them a broad and generous viewpoint. Each saw in the Master his own desires, his own selfishness. Each tried to speak for the Master but none could reach the colossal height attained by Jesus. Here stood the Master of Men, surrounded by only the ignorant and the poor. As we see Him struggling to build Brotherhood and Love in the midst of this wilderness, struggling not only against his enemies but against his friends who could not even stay awake for a few moments while He was praying, the Son of God sinks into insignificance beside the heroic Son of Man, for God could never be deceived. God could not actually suffer, for at any moment he could have spoken and the worlds would be no more, but not so with Jesus the Man. He had no strength but His divinely unselfish nature. He fought the fight that each of us must fight and He is our inspiration, because He is human just as we are. He was made in the form of a man and was tempted as man is tempted and He was strong where man is weak. He is the ideal of man, because He is the blossom of the flower of manhood. If we view Him as a man He is close to our hearts and we can strive to be like Him, but if we view Him as a God He is a great distant thing, so far away, so great, that we could never be like Him, anyway. It is the Man and not the God who deserves our love. The Man with disheveled hair and tattered garments standing upon the porch of the Temple, with the whip of smallcords in his hand, driving the money-lenders from the House of His Father, struggling to make religion honest, to breed in the soul of His fellows the love and sincerity which was His own.

Follow Him out of the monastery on the side of Mount Tabor, as barefooted, staff in hand, without friends in the world, save that little group He is leaving behind, He starts forth to build His faith, a person unknown in His own day, laughed at and ridiculed, a lonely stranger, fighting a war against all the selfishness of His race. I love to think of Him as alone walking down the road, the dusty road that winds in and out and finally comes to an end on the ragged side of Calvary, great mountains rising above Him, a crumbling civilization about Him, a tiny pathetic figure, struggling against everything. Then I see the ages pass and pilgrimages come from all parts of the world to kiss the dust where this lonely mendicant wandered. I love to realize that a single, lonely man, friendless but filled with sincerity, so lived, so dreamed and so died that all the world at the name of Jesus the Christ bows its head in reverence even though many parts of it worship other gods. All parts see in Him a good and noble man. This is the achievement of one human creature. It promises that if we have His sincerity we likewise shall achieve; that greater things than He has done shall we do also, if like Him we go forth into the world, strong in our realization of right, sincere in our desire to serve and unselfish in our daily living.

No more glorious title can the world bestow upon one who has come out of it than the appellation Friend of Man. Emperors may come and go, empires may crumble, but while history lasts, while there is one soul alive to remember, those Great Unselfish Ones who wandered earth in rags but served man will be remembered. Theirs are not tombstones of marble and granite; their memorials are civilizations raised upon the great truths which they preached; their shrines are in the hearts of men and being dead they are most alive in that they live forever in the gratitude of their fellow creatures. Only those who live in the hearts of others are truly great. The crowned heads lie in their gloomy crypts in shrines of marble, but the sages and saviors speak again to every generation. Thousands of artists paint their lives, thousands of songs sing their praise, thousands of books tell again their words, millions of

hearts are strengthened for their daily labor by remembrance of their unselfishness.

Occasionally one born of the earth becomes by his own virtue a Son of God, for he is a Son of God who recognizes God as his Father. All things are Sons of God. No one more than the rest. But some are truer to their divine parentage than others. Some try more sincerely than the vast majority to be true to their birthright. Some have blossomed into the conscious realization of their divinity more fully than others. Nowhere in the history of the world was a more supreme sacrifice made than Jesus made at Jerusalem. In giving His life He gave all he had to give and none can excel that offering. He died for His ideals and it was His death which really resulted in the success of His ministry. As to just how far the story of His death is allegorical and how far historical, it is difficult to state, but the crucifixion is the keystone to Christianity and whether it be an historical incident or merely a great allegorical myth based upon the crucified World Saviors who had gone before Him, its message is equally potent to the Western World.

He went from house to house preaching the Gospel of Brotherhood, breaking down the caste systems that ruled the Jews during His lifetime and preaching to the poor. The multitudes followed Him impressed by His words, for they gave hope to the hopeless, courage to those for whom life held few blessings. He came not to those who were well but to the sick in mind and body. He gathered simple fisherfolk around Him and, sitting on a mound of sand or in a boat, preached his doctrines to the mass of ignorant people who dwelt in the little villages. His followers were all revolting against the tyrannies of Rome. They brought Him a million petty whims and desires to settle for them.

After He left them His work was carried on by those Disciples who slept during the hours of His agony. They did the best they could, these fishermen and money-lenders; they told the story as they saw it, but they could not know, they did not see and none of them apparently comprehended. The Christian faith today is not built upon the words of Jesus. It is built upon what these disciples thought He said. When you realize how terribly people are misquoted today by their best friends you can understand how books, many of them written years after the death of Jesus, and some of them written by people who never actually met Him, contain a tremendous personal equation put there by the author.

In the little town of Bethany on the road to Jerusalem stands even to this day the ruined home of Mary and Martha and behind it is the tomb of Lazarus, which you can still visit by means of a circular spiral stairway leading down into the rocks. Of course, we are not certain that that is the place, but it seems reasonable to suppose that it is, and the veneration of ages has at least made it a very sacred spot, for the hopes and dreams and ideals of our brother creatures sanctify the places that are dear to them. If the Christian Church knew what Jesus said in that little house surrounded by the narrow circle of friends who really cared and really understood, it would know more about Christianity than all the Gospels and commentaries which it has since been able to gather together. Here He told dreams that probably will never come true; He unfolded his great hope and sitting on the rough stone benches, opened to them His heart. He may have told them the secret keys which He concealed from the thoughtless multitude. To me that is the most cherished spot, the most human place of all the sacred places of the Christian faith.

In this little house He dreamed of the Golden Age that was to come again into this old world; He saw a new civilization arising, built upon the solid foundation of Brotherhood and Love; He saw all the creatures of the earth worshipping one Father and working side by side glorifying each other and that God Who was the Maker of them all. But the dream has never come true. There was too much selfishness left in the soul of man; he could not give up the old and rise to the new. His faith has crucified the gentle Teacher a thousand times since that day on Calvary, not from maliciousness but because it never saw and never understood the thing He was trying to teach. It saw temporal power and the building of a great organization and it lost sight of the fact that Jesus was founding a kingdom not of the earth but of heaven. He did not want to be a king nor a ruler of men. He only wanted all the world to be kind, each part to the other. In the little house by the side of the road He built the Castle of His Dreams, but its ruined walls can never tell the story he preached there. Those dreams are lost to us. We have just a few broken records of His unwritten words and a few scattered remnants which the makers of the Testaments have rejected. He wandered homeless with His disciples, trying to establish peace in a world of discord. He taught that peace lay not in freedom from Caesar but in freedom

from sin. This teaching has been lost to the Christian faith, because it defied the man and made belief in Him more important than good works.

Gazing down from the high mountain of his own accomplishment, Jesus can have no greater sorrow than His own church. He can have nothing that seems so desirous of disobeying Him. If you could live again with the man Who struggled and died, with the Christian martyrs singing in the arena the first hymns, if you could follow the Apostle Paul in his wanderings, you would have a different church. He preached on the open ground, on a knoll of earth, surrounded by the poor. He spoke simple words, words that a child could understand, mostly words of one syllable. They were words for the hearts of men, words of hope in oppression, of peace in despair, of strength in affliction. There are many stories among the early Mysteries concerning his death. Some say that the Apostles drew lots as to which should betray Him, that the prophecy should be fulfilled. Other legends state that He was not crucified at all. Some of the early Essene teachings are that He was crucified and buried but was later brought back from the dead by the power of their secret wisdom. One legend is that His Ascension was not to heaven as we commonly believe but that He walked up the side of a mountain, forbidding His disciples to follow. Reaching the top, the clouds concealed Him. They believed He had ascended to heaven, but, in reality, He walked down the other side of the mountain and taught his Gospel in another land. Wandering all over the earth, He finally died in great age, still serving the Gospel which He believed.

In the Far East some of the sages say that the Master Teachers of the ancient world still walk the earth among the mountains; that Jesus and Buddha are deeply fond one of the other, One friend, rather shocked, asked: "Do they agree?" The answer from the aged teacher was: "Yes, for all that is good agrees with itself. Not in wisdom but in ignorance do we find dissension." Those who serve Humanity are Brothers in a Great Cause. Those who are served by them are Brothers in a Great Quest.

There is too much idolatry in religion today, for by worshipping a personality you destroy something. An idol is merely a crystallized ideal and when we worship a personality instead of a principle we crucify the true principle upon the cross of personality, for we build separate-ness and divide ourselves from ourselves. Every nation pictures Christ according to its own point of view. Among the Teutons he is golden-haired and blue-eyed; among the Syrians he is dark and swarthy. A little Chinese boy once drew a picture of Jesus for a missionary friend of mine and it was the cutest little Chinese Jesus you could possibly imagine.

We have tried many cults and isms up to the present time. It may sometime come into our soul to try Christianity. Some day we will give up our arguments, dissensions and various theological vicissitudes and try the living of the Christian life in the way that the Master instructed us to. Some day we shall know what He meant when He said: "Those who live the life shall know the doctrine". We have a thousand substitutes for Christianity and thousands of substitutes for virtue, but only one way of building and unfolding the divine side of our nature. Some day we shall build a great civilization raised upon the foundation of Fraternity. This will be a monument to the martyrs of the ancient world and prove that they have not died in vain. Maybe new generations will realize the dreams of antiquity, for each age bequeaths to the next the unfinished structure of civilization. As David left to his son the work of building the Temple for the Lord, so people after people go to the oblivion of racial graveyards and leave to the unborn future the structure that they never finished.

Now let us consider for a moment the symbolical side of the life of Christ. The myths that have been woven into the simple historical account are really of greater spiritual importance than the actual life of the man, for they deal with a great cosmic drama, and age-old drama. This story is not played out at any particular place or time, but in all places and in all times. All of the world Saviors have been associated with the phases of the Sun. The first world Savior was the Sun. It raised from death into life all with whom its rays came in contact. It turned the darkness into light and the cold into warmth. It was the radiant Savior of all nations. Its golden hair was its streaming rays. The Sun was the strong man. He was the Samson of the Jews and the Hercules of the Greeks, for the God of Strength performing his many labors was symbolical of the Sun passing through the Houses of the Heavens. The Sun was called a Lion because of the shaggy mane (his rays). Slowly the historical man Jesus has been lost in the Solar myths of antiquity. All of the important parts of His life are related to the power of the Sun. His birth in Virgo the Virgin, His flight into Egypt to excape the vengeance of Herod. All these are Star myths. The Three Wise Persians whom we call the Magi were to the ancient world

the Three Bright Stars in the Sword Belt of Orion. His transfiguration, His baptism, His miracles, His death and resurrection and ascension, all these things are now taught to us as they were taught in the ancient Solar myths relating to the life, growth and decay of the Sun during the various parts of the year.

Let us take as one example the feeding of the multitudes with the barley loaves and fishes. The sign of Pisces is two small fishes, the sign of Virgo is a sheaf of wheat or barley. The feeding of the multitudes is symbolical of the fact that at a certain time of the year the Sun sends its rays to the earth, feeding all living things through the sign of the two fishes and the barley loaves. Jesus is called the Lamb of God, which is itself an astronomical title, and at another time He is called the Fisher of Men, because the Sun was in the sign of the fishes when He is supposed to have been born.

The stories of all of the world Saviors are essentially the same. Nearly all of them have been born of immaculate conceptions. Thirty of them have been crucified for the sins of the world. A dozen or more have had Mary for a mother. All were overshadowed by divine prerogative. From all ends of the earth come one story. The details of the account differ with local conditions, but in the great essentials the stories always agree. In the Mystery Schools there are many very rare and precious secrets concerning the actual meaning of the Christos Mythos. We are reminded again and again of that very peculiar statement "Christ in You, the Hope of Glory". The word Christ means oil and is merely a complimentary title which has certain indirect reference to the Sun.

Raphael, the great illuminated painter, gave the world two very wonderful mystic conceptions in his Marriage of the Virgin, and the Sistine Madonna. In the Marriage of the Virgin Joseph is shown with six toes on one of his feet, while in the Sistine Madonna the High Priest has a faintly traceable sixth finger on one of his hands. The sixth toe represented the fact that Joseph walked with God, while the sixth finger was symbolic of the sixth sense of spiritual vision. In explaining to you simply the spiritual myth of the Son of God, we shall use the Sistine Madonna. Most of you have either seen a copy of this picture or else can easily secure one for an insignificant sum. In the center of the painting stands the radiant Madonna with the Christ Child in her arms. Before this spiritual vision kneels two figures. On the right is a woman with her face turned away from the miracle, while on the left kneels a priest gazing straight into the face of the Madonna. His head is shaven and his tiara lies beside him on the ground. At the bottom of the figure are two little cherubs gazing upward. It is said that while Raphael was painting this picture two little urchins from the street used to stand gazing up at him and he painted them into his picture as the two little cherubs. Behind the Madonna is an endless mass of faintly visible faces gazing outward from the golden light.

Mary, the World Virgin, represents Nature, the Mother of all things. Her name signifies water and also the tears of sorrow. The endless motion of water was universally used by the ancient worlds to symbolize the ever-changing life of mortal things. The bitterness of the waters symbolized the bitterness of the sorrow and misfortune which seems to fill the world in which we live. In India there is a word called Maya which means illusion or impermanence. The term is applied to all the visible universe, because the visible universe is not the real universe nor is it the permanent universe. Mary represents this illusion and her flowing garments are symbolic of the mist that shrouds the souls of living creatures and which we know as ignorance.

Out of this illusion is born the reality, a radiant spiritual child, who turns back again to save his world. We know in Nature that whenever there is a great need something is produced to fill that need, for necessity is the mother of necessary things. After we have wandered long in the illusion, have sought in vain for happiness in a world of selfishness and thoughtlessness, after some great sorrow breaks our hearts, the soul of man rises out of the shell of ignorance and perversion which has long imprisoned it, Its mother is Darkness and Suffering and the soul of man is not born without travail. Therefore, in the Madonna, with the moon under her feet, the ancient world saw life as we know it, veiled in ignorance and robed in the garments of materiality. Now and then one is born out of life who, rising triumphant from the darkness of his own lower nature, becomes in truth a Son of God.

There are two paths that lead to spiritual realization: One, the path of devotion, is symbolized by the kneeling woman with her face turned away from the miracle.

The heart of man grows through faith and service. It does not need to see. It knows without seeing. It recognizes through the faculty of intuition. The female figure represents service, love, faith and charity, by means of which the great miracle is realized without being seen. The second figure, that of the aged patriarch, represents the power of human thought, the path of the mind. The mind must see in order to believe. The scientist with his instruments, the philosopher with his mathematics, these must have proof or they cannot believe. Their path of growth is the path of reason, logic, philosophy and law. They shall also attain the reality. The head of the priest is shaven, so that the third eye, the All-Seeing Eye of the Gods, may see through the crown of his head, and His crown of dominion over the three worlds lies at his feet, for he has given up power that he may have true spiritual understanding. The female figure represents the heart; the masculine figure, the mind. And from a perfect balance of these two there is born in man a spiritual light which shall free him from the darkness and bondage of ignorance. The illuminated world Savior is a Widow's Son, for all the human race are fatherless until they have found again the Father whom they have ceased to know. The lower world is the Widow in mourning for her lost Lord, and out of the world in pain is born the man child who shall slay the dragon and redeem his people. It is a very wonderful myth, a story that must be lived out by every individual as he slowly walks the path that leads to human liberation.

The lower animal nature of man is well symbolized in the Mysteries by Mary of Magdala, who is the plaything of the Roman legions. But, like Mary, she exchanges the scarlet robes of Rome for the white garment of purity and understanding. The lower bodies then serve their divine Lord and ask only that they may live from day to day in His light and in His name.

One of the most important things for Christians today to do is, when they pick up the Bible and begin to read it, to ask themselves "What does this mean to me now and how will it help me to live better, to think better and to serve more intelligently the great needs of the human race?" We seem to feel that these old legends meant something ages ago but that they have lost their value and cannot be applied to our modern problems. This is a wrong attitude. The beauty of these great stories is that they are always true, for they are based upon great principles of Nature that are as old as Time and yet ever new. Jesus lived as a man, but to the modern world He is merely a great symbolic lesson and into His life have been woven the allegories taken from all the religions of the world, from all the arts and philosophies of pagandom to make doubly sure that we gain the true message of the ancient world.

Let us consider Christianity as an inclusive, synthetic cult, giving us in a form most readily understandable the best of all that has gone before. Let us be grateful to the uttermost parts of the earth, for they have contributed much to our modern culture. When we try to study Christianity, let us not be afraid to search in any corner of the earth for that knowledge which will help us to be truer to the beautiful message and the nobly inspired Messenger.